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INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Rail Transport

(Fifty-second session, 5-7 October 1998,
agenda item 17)

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 1999-2003
OF THE WORKING PARTY

Note by the Secretariat

The text of the programme of work reproduced below is based on the content of the programme of work approved by the Inland Transport Committee appearing in Addendum 1 to the report of its sixtieth session (ECE/TRANS/125).

With a view to facilitating comparison of the descriptive part of the attached programme with the text adopted by the Committee at its sixtieth session (ECE/TRANS/125/Add.1), the secretariat has indicated additional project elements or elements replacing the old text in bold characters, while the text proposed for deletion has been reproduced in square brackets.

The Working Party may wish to examine its draft programme of work for 1999-2003 (TRANS/SC.2/1998/14, in light of new guidelines adopted by the Inland Transport Committee at its sixtieth session in January 1998 and the relevant decision taken by the Commission at its fifty-third session.

Please note that the distribution of documentation for the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) is no longer "restricted". Accordingly, the secretariat has adopted a new numbering system whereby all working documents other than Reports and Agendas will be numbered as follows: TRANS/SC.2/year/serial number. Reports, Agendas, resolutions and major publications will retain their previous numbering system (i.e. TRANS/WP.5/189)

In this context, the Working Party may note that the Committee, at its sixtieth session, adopted further guidelines for the presentation of activities of the Inland Transport Committee's programme of work. It asked the Chairpersons of its subsidiary bodies to examine whether those programme activities for which they assumed responsibility complied with the identified requirements. If this was not the case, the necessary modifications should be discussed at their respective sessions to make sure that the appropriate decisions were taken and that the amended texts of the draft programme of work were submitted to the meeting of the Committee's Bureau to be held on 24 and 25 November 1998 (ECE/TRANS/125, paras. 136-144).

In accordance with the request of the Committee and taking into account the decision taken by the Commission, at its fifty-third session, regarding "Common Guidelines for Prioritization of the Work of the PSBs" (E/1998/38-E/ECE/1365, para. 29), the following modifications have been incorporated in agreement with the Chairman of the Working Party in the draft in comparison to the programme of work as reproduced in ECE/TRANS/125/Add.1: (i) reference to output expected within the next two years (or earlier) under each work element; (ii) separation of work elements which are permanent in character from those with a limited period; (iii) streamlining, as much as possible, of the programme of work and specification of the broad objectives and the measures to be carried out to achieve these objectives.

The Working Party may wish to consider its programme of work for 1999-2003 as reproduced in this document.

Furthermore, the Committee, at its sixtieth session, requested its subsidiary bodies to consider how they could contribute to the Joint Programme of Action drawn up by the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment (ECE/TRANS/125, para. 22) (see also item 3 of this agenda).

In accordance with the request of the Committee and after consultation with the Chairman of the Working Party, the secretariat has identified programme elements 02.4.1 (a) and 02.4.1 (d) of its programme of work (ECE/TRANS/125/Add.1) that might be relevant for follow-up regarding element III (d) of the Joint Programme of Action (ECE/RCTE/CONF./3/FINAL).

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 1999-2003

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 02.4: RAIL TRANSPORT

02.4.1 Rail transport infrastructure Priority: 1

- I. Review of the situation concerning the implementation and possible amendments to the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC).

Description: Study of possibilities for the improvement of international rail transport **and the creation of an efficient European rail freight network**

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party on Rail Transport will carry out the following activities:

- (a) Consideration of the AGC Agreement with a view to possibly: implementing and, whenever feasible, improving existing standards and operational parameters;
taking into account new east-west traffic flows;
raising environmental, energy and safety standards;
taking into account the ECE Conventions on the Environment.
(Continuing); **Output expected: Report on amendment of the AGC network; Report on the development of a European conventional and high-speed railway network. (1999)**
- (b)[(c)] Consideration of the influence [on railways] of intermodal transport techniques, especially those concerning investment, **as well as the** harmonization of rolling stock and speed **on railways** to facilitate the integration of these techniques into the railway system **and ensure thereby overall interoperability.** (Continuing); **Output expected: Report on investment in rail infrastructure and railway rolling stock in member countries.**
- (c)[(d)] Periodic review of the list of marshalling yards of international importance with a view to cutting down their numbers. (Continuing); **Output expected: Updated report on the location of important marshalling yards within the European railway network (1999).**
- (d)[(b)] Periodically survey passenger and goods traffic on the various sections of lines of the AGC network in order to provide support for transport planning; the [first] **second** survey is based on data for [1990] **1995** [(1998)]; **Output expected: Report on total train traffic on the AGC network in 1995.**

- II. Special project: Trans-European Railway (TER).

Description: Within the framework of the UN/ECE, the TER countries have established an appropriate administrative and financial framework, with the aim of developing a rail network as part of an integrated European international rail system.

Work to be undertaken

- (a) Consideration of specific project developments to promote international rail traffic. (Continuing); **Output expected: Annual progress report on activities carried out within the TER project.**
- (b) Consideration of possibilities for financing of TER in order to promote the upgrading and construction of internationally important rail lines. (Continuing)
- (c) Consideration of possible utilization of the results achieved under the project in other UN/ECE activities in the field of rail infrastructure including the implementation of AGC and AGTC in order to benefit from mutual experiences. (Continuing)

III. Interregional Cooperation

Description: Cooperation with other regional commissions and international bodies involved in development of interregional links.

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party will be kept informed of exchanges of information between the secretariats of the regional commissions and other international bodies in order to benefit from experiences gained in other regions of the world. (Continuing)

02.4.2 Harmonization of requirements concerning international railway transport including rail safety and facilitation of its operations Priority: 1

Description:

- (a) Simplification and harmonization of administrative formalities, particularly, for documents and procedures at border-crossing.
- (b) Harmonization of and search for standardized requirements concerning the utilization of railway infrastructure including computerization aspects.
- (c) Elaboration of proposals and preparation of studies aimed at strengthening, consolidating and extending the position of rail transport on international transport markets.
- [(d)] [Study of interface problems of railways having different gauges (transshipment/gauge changing procedures, logistic arrangements to support transshipment processes).]
- e)] Analysis of problems relating to the harmonization and improvement of rail safety.
- f)] Consideration of legal regulations applicable to the contract for the transport of goods and passengers by rail so as to establish a standard legal system (harmonization of the SMGS/SMPS and CIM/CIV systems).

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party on Rail Transport will carry out the following activities:

- (a) Consideration of specific difficulties encountered at border-crossings in the transport of passengers and goods by rail with a view to accelerating border crossing operations and establishing a programme to deal with problems common to several routes. (Continuing); **Output expected: Report on bi- and multilateral contacts of Governments and railways to improve the crossing of borders in international rail traffic. (1999)**
 - (b) Consideration of follow-up of the implementation of recommendations and preparation of new texts or amendments to existing texts, if necessary, notably concerning the facilitation of border crossing with the aim to improve international rail traffic. (Continuing)
 - (c) Review of requirements concerning railway operations and regulations, reduction of transport time and improvement in the precision of movements in the international carriage of goods, new operative developments in rail transport, the integration of services of different railways, the study of the possibilities for harmonizing the application and periods of summer time with a view to upgrading transport quality in rail transport. (Continuing); **Output expected: Report on the application of summer time. (1999)**
 - (d)[(e)] Analysis of Government policies concerning rail safety to contribute to an improvement of safety in international transport. (Continuing); **Output expected: Report on the risk assessment technique in rail transport. (1999)**
 - (e)[(d)] Analysis of the various elements of productivity in rail transport and the possibilities to increase rail productivity in particular for international transport. [(1998)]; **Output expected: Report on the development of productivity in rail transport in member countries. (1999)**
 - (f) Consideration on the basis of reports by the international organizations concerned of the progress accomplished on the harmonization of legal regulations applicable to the contract for the transport of goods and passengers by rail to ensure compatibility of the regulation concerned. [(1998)]; **Output expected: Report by international organizations concerned on the progress made in the elimination of difficulties arising from different legal systems in international rail transport. (1999)**
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